

Consideration of H.R. 3125, The Radio Spectrum Inventory Act

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Wireless communications services are rapidly growing. Each year, millions of users graduate from basic cell phones to smart phones that employ a range of data services.

Those services require far greater bandwidth than traditional cell phones.

And the data services offered through smart phones are becoming ever more sophisticated after employing full motion video.

The combination of greater smart phone use and far more elaborate applications is placing unprecedented demands on our limited wireless spectrum availability.

To meet these growing demands, in the near future more spectrum must be made available for commercial wireless services.

Even the launch later this year of the fourth generation of wireless services by the major cellular service providers, using the spectrum previously used for analog TV broadcasts, will meet the spectrum demand for only a brief period.

Responding to this need, last July I joined with Chairman Waxman, Full Committee Ranking Member Barton, and the Ranking Member of our Subcommittee Mr. Stearns in introducing the Radio Spectrum Inventory Act, which is before the House this morning.

It directs the NTIA and the FCC to undertake a comprehensive survey of the nation's spectrum and report to us on current spectrum utilization, with recommendations of which, if any, of the least utilized blocks of spectrum should be reallocated for commercial use or be subjected to spectrum sharing with commercial users.

The measure is a thoughtful approach to meeting the extraordinary spectrum demands the nation will soon face.

It will produce a timely blueprint for our future decisions about which spectrum should be reallocated for auctions to commercial service providers.

Within one year of the date of enactment, the NTIA and the FCC would also create a website to make the spectrum inventory publicly available. They would report the results of the inventory to the House and Senate Commerce Committees within two years of the date of enactment. The report would include a description of information that could not be made publicly available for national security reasons. Subsequent reports would be submitted biennially.

The agencies would also within two years submit to the House and Senate Commerce Committees a reallocation report that would include a recommendation of which spectrum should be reallocated or otherwise made available for shared access. That recommendation should be updated by the agencies in follow-up reports to the Committees, which are to be submitted every other year. Those follow-up reports may be updates to the initial report and not top-to-bottom reviews.

I want to thank my colleagues Mr. Waxman, Mr. Barton and Mr. Stearns for the cooperative and bipartisan manner in which we have introduced and moved forward with this important measure.

